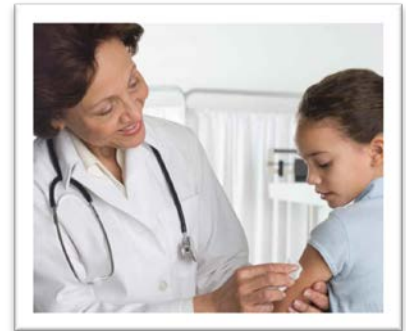




FAQs

Immunizations for Children and Youth in Foster Care: What Resource Parents Need to Know

CFSA requires children under 18 years of age to get regularly scheduled immunizations. These FAQs lay out your responsibilities and limitations when it comes to getting immunizations for children in your care.



I'm bringing the child to a new doctor. Can I fill out and sign the enrollment paperwork?

Yes and No. The doctor's office will likely ask you to fill out a new patient packet, including 'consent to treatment' forms that cover immunizations. You can fill out most of the packet, but you *cannot* sign the consent to treatment forms. In the child's placement packet, there should be a consent form signed by the birth parent, or a Family Court order granting consent. If there are issues at the doctor's office with the form (or court order), contact the child's social worker.

Why can't I consent to a child's immunizations under the Reasonable and Prudent Parent (RPP) standard?

While immunizations are common, and most parents want their children to receive them, District law says they are not "routine" and do not count as "emergency medical treatment." Immunizations therefore require the written consent of the child's parent (or the DC Superior Court) and do not fall under the RPP standard.

I've brought many children in care to get immunized. Have I been doing something wrong?

No. You have not been doing anything wrong. We absolutely want you to bring children in your care to get their regularly scheduled immunizations. But CFSA and the doctor need a signed birth parent consent form or a court order on file first.

When the child came into my care, she already had a pediatrician and I've been taking her to see that doctor. How do I know whether the birth parent consented to immunizations?

The on-going doctor should have the consent (or a record of the parent's denial of consent) on file. Tell them you cannot sign the consent for immunizations and ask if they already have this on file. If they don't, talk with your social worker about getting the consent. If the doctor does not have a signed consent form from the parent, then present the one that is in the child's placement packet. Contact the social worker if there are issues that need to be resolved.

If the birth parent refuses to consent to immunizing the child, what then?

It depends on the reasons why. In most cases, CFSA will seek a court order to allow the child to be immunized on schedule. But, if the parent objects to immunizations on religious grounds or for medical reasons, it's likely the child won't be immunized.

How can I enroll the child in school or day care if she's not immunized?

If the child isn't immunized because the parent refused for religious or medical reasons, most school systems have opt-out procedures that will let the child enroll anyway. The school can tell you what you need to do, but if you need help or have questions, the child's social worker can link you with a CFSA educational specialist.

I'm a resource parent for an older youth who wants to get an immunization. Can he consent for himself?

Only youth who are 18 years or older can consent to their own immunizations.

Where can I find more information about immunizations?

The American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization information page has helpful resources, tip sheets, newsletters and resources for parents and caretakers: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunizations/Pages/Immunizations-home.aspx>

If you have questions about **immunizations**, send an email to CFSA's Health Services Administration at cfsa.healthservices@dc.gov.